

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (currently amended) A management method of hardware configuration information by a computer by which hardware configuration information of each device constituting the computer is managed, said management method comprising:

acquiring hardware configuration information of each device at a plurality of predetermined timing sets by operation of a single computer program, each time the computer is switched on; and

recording the acquired hardware configuration information into a predetermined nonvolatile storage medium with a hardware configuration information acquired previously, the previously acquired hardware configuration information containing a comparison field, the recording is performed by operation of the single computer program,

wherein the predetermined timing sets comprise timing at the time of executing BIOS of the computer and timing after OS is activated.

2. (previously presented) The management method of hardware configuration information according to claim 1 further comprising:

reading out the hardware configuration information acquired in the past and recorded in the nonvolatile storage medium;

comparing the readout hardware configuration information with the acquired hardware configuration information; and

displaying the comparison result onto a predetermined display unit.

3. (cancelled)

4. (previously presented) The management method of hardware configuration information according to claim 1, wherein:

the hardware configuration information includes a version number of a program related to each device.

5. (previously presented) The management method of hardware configuration information according to claim 1, wherein:

the computer is a client connected to a server through a network;

the server receives client hardware configuration information acquired by the client through the network; and

the server records the received hardware configuration information into the predetermined nonvolatile storage medium.

6. (previously presented) The management method of hardware configuration information according to claim 5, wherein:

the hardware configuration information includes a version number of a program related to each device in the client;

the server records the most up-to-date program and a version number thereof with respect to a program related to each device in the client;

the server compares the program version number related to a predetermined device included in the received hardware configuration information with a version number of the most up-to-date program of said predetermined device; and

when the comparison results in inconsistency, the server updates the program related to said predetermined device to the most up-to-date program.

7. (currently amended) A recording medium in which a program managing hardware configuration information of each device constituting a computer is stored, wherein said program comprises:

a process of acquiring hardware configuration information of each device at a plurality of predetermined timing sets by operation of a single computer program, each time the computer is switched on; and

a process of recording said acquired hardware configuration information into a predetermined nonvolatile storage medium with a hardware configuration information acquired previously, the previously acquired hardware configuration information containing a comparison field, the recording is performed by operation of the single computer program,

wherein the predetermined timing sets comprise timing at the time of executing BIOS of the computer and timing after OS is activated.

8. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 7 in which said program is stored, wherein said single program further comprises:

a process of reading out hardware configuration information which was acquired in the past and is stored in the nonvolatile storage medium;

a process of comparing said readout hardware configuration information with the acquired hardware configuration information; and

a process of displaying the comparison result onto a predetermined display unit.

9. (currently amended) A computer having a plurality of devices, comprising:  
an acquisition section by which hardware configuration information of each device is acquired at a plurality of predetermined timing sets by operation of a single computer program, each time the computer is switched on; and

a recording section which records said acquired hardware configuration information into a predetermined nonvolatile storage medium with a hardware configuration information acquired previously, the previously acquired hardware configuration information containing a comparison field, the recording is performed by operation of the single computer program,

wherein the predetermined timing sets comprises timing at the time of executing BIOS of the computer and timing after OS is activated.

10. (previously presented) The computer according to claim 9 comprising:  
a comparison section which reads out the hardware configuration information acquired in the past and stored in the nonvolatile storage medium, and compares said readout hardware configuration information with the acquired hardware configuration information; and  
a display section which displays the comparison result onto a display unit.

11. (cancelled)

12. (previously presented) The computer according to claim 9, wherein:  
the hardware configuration information includes a version number of a program related to each device.

13. (currently amended) A computer connected through a network to another computer having a plurality of devices, comprising:

a reception section which receives hardware configuration information of each device acquired at a plurality of predetermined timing sets from the other computer through the network, wherein the predetermined timing sets comprises timing at the time of executing BIOS of the computer and timing after OS is activated; and

a recording section which records said received hardware configuration information into a predetermined nonvolatile storage medium with a hardware configuration information acquired previously, the previously acquired hardware configuration information containing a comparison field.

14. (previously presented) The computer according to claim 13, wherein the hardware configuration information includes a version number of a program related to each device, and said computer comprises:

a comparison section which compares the version number of the program related to each device included in the hardware configuration information received from the other computer with the version number of the most up-to-date program related to said device; and

an update section which updates the program related to the device of the other computer to the most up-to-date program when the comparison results in inconsistency.

15. (currently amended) A recording medium in which a single program to be executed by a first computer connected through a network to a second computer having a plurality of devices is stored, wherein said single program comprises:

a process of receiving hardware configuration information of each device acquired at a plurality of predetermined timing sets from the second computer through the network by operation of a first computer program, each time the computer is switched on and wherein the predetermined timing sets comprises timing at the time of executing BIOS of the computer and timing after OS is activated; and

a process of recording said received hardware configuration information into a predetermined nonvolatile storage medium with a hardware configuration information acquired previously, the previously acquired hardware configuration information containing a comparison field.

16. (new) A method of managing a hardware configuration environment comprising:  
storing in a predetermined nonvolatile storage medium with previously acquired hardware configuration information containing a comparison field a currently acquired hardware

configuration information comprising a plurality of predetermined timing sets by operation of a single computer program upon computer initialization, the predetermined timing sets comprise timing at the time of executing BIOS of the computer and timing after OS is activated.